

BOOK REVIEWS

IT'S AN ALLERGY. By Frank G. Crandall, Jr., M.D. Murray and Gee Inc., Hollywood, California, 1946, pp. 313. Price \$3.50.

Recent survey indicates that about 10 per cent of the total population of the United States or about 14 000 000 people, have some major allergic condition such as hay fever, asthma, hives or eczema. It is not surprising, therefore, that the layman has become allergy conscious and has sought some simple explanation of the probable cause of his ailment and how to obtain worthwhile relief. Until recent years, however, this information was available for the most part in articles published in lay periodicals and in the health columns in our newspapers. Whereas such articles are informative, they do not always have the authoritative stamp of the physician devoting much of his time to allergic diseases.

Dr. Crandall's authoritative book written for the layman and the allergic patient presents the subject in a clear and simple style. The subject matter is divided logically into separate chapters devoted to such common allergic manifestations as Asthma, Hay Fever, Food Allergy, Hives and Eczema. In addition there are chapters on the Frequency, Diagnosis and Treatment of Allergy. The language is clear and simple and should be easily understood by the layman. The fact that the author brings to his special work in Allergy a large clinical experience obtained in general practice adds great value to the advice which he gives the allergic patient as to the manner of living, eating and working so as to obtain as much relief as one may expect in an ailment in which heredity plays so important a part.

In recent years other books on allergy have been written for the layman but none has accomplished so well Dr. Crandall's aim, namely to acquaint the allergic patient with the underlying cause of his ailment and how to combat it.

It should be stressed further that the practitioner who has not followed the recent developments in our knowledge of allergic diseases may profit by reading Dr. Crandall's book.

HEALTH EXAMINATIONS. A Manual for the General Practitioner. Prepared for The Medical Society of the County of New York by the Special Committee on Preventive Medicine. 1946. Mead Johnson & Company. Pp. 144.

The early recognition and care of abnormal states in the individual have become an important part of the duties of the general practitioner and his diagnostic partners, the internist and the pediatrician. The stated object of this manual is to make available for convenient use of the physician the content and method of examinations of various types of patients, according to age or the reason for which they may seek examination.

Some of the suggested examinations are more suitable for the specialist than the general practitioner (such as Eye and Ear); other sections are colored by the opinions of the author (Body Build and Endocrine Imbalance). There are a few contradictions arising from differences in viewpoint of two authors (on page 38, thumb sucking is stated to have no deleterious effect on dentition; on page 138, it is said to be productive often of malocclusion of the teeth or facial deformities).

On the whole, it is well done as a quick review and reference book for the practitioner who may wish to become conversant with the reasons for and the techniques of the examination of the presumed healthy person. The chapters on emotional factors are especially recommended.

RENAL HYPERTENSION. By Eduardo Braun-Menéndez, Juan Carlos Fasciolo, Luis F. Leloir, Juan M. Muñoz, and Alberto C. Taquini, Institute of Physiology, Faculty of Medical Sciences and Institute of Cardiology, V. F. Greg Foundation, Buenos Aires, Argentina. Translated by Levis Dexter, M.D., Harvard Medical School and Peter Bent Brigham Hospital, Boston, Massachusetts. Pp. 451. 93 illustrations. First edition. Charles C. Thomas, Springfield, Illinois, 1946. Price \$6.75.

The velocity of new work in the field of renal hypertension has slowed considerably in the past few years in comparison to the enormous productivity following Goldblatt's classic paper in 1934. The lull in the investigative developments has been wisely used by the authors to present the most complete, critical, and authoritative review of the subject of renal hypertension available in the literature. The translation by Dr. Dexter, with the addition of work done since the original Spanish edition was written, is clear and the style is easily followed.

Several features of the book are outstanding. The most important is the really critical evaluation of the vast literature that is reviewed and the authors are particularly well qualified by their own important contributions and experience to do this. Many books faithfully catalogue and compile papers relating to the subject, but few analyze the work done with a critical eye toward accurateness of method, meticulousness of detail, validity of the conclusions as based on the facts, and correlation with previous and subsequent work insofar as consistencies are concerned. The authors are direct and blunt at times in pointing out uncritical work or commenting on conclusions not adequately demonstrated by the data presented. It is felt that this is most valuable.

Another feature of the book that is outstanding is the incorporation of 93 figures that illustrate significant work described in the text. These figures relate not only to the original work of the authors, but to significant work elsewhere, and allow the reader to evaluate for himself the data presented. The extensive bibliography of 1,238 references will be invaluable in reviewing specific phases of renal hypertension and it reflects the tremendous output of work done in the field, since most of the papers were published in the last ten years.

The appendix summarizing the author's methods of preparation and assay of renin, hypertensinogen, hypertension, and hypertensinase will prove of value to those working in the field.

The sections of the book dealing with essential human hypertension are not as complete as those dealing with experimental hypertension. One might also object to the relatively abrupt manner in which the authors discuss the important work of Castleman and Smithwick on renal biopsies performed on hypertensive patients during sympathectomy. The authors indicate that the biopsy findings do not necessarily reflect the arteriolar changes in the kidney as a whole. It is of interest that the authors believe essential hypertension in man is primarily renal in origin.

This book can be highly recommended to all physicians.

EARLY AMBULATION AND RELATED PROCEDURES IN SURGICAL MANAGEMENT. By Daniel J. Leithauser, M.D., F.A.C.S., Chief of Surgery, St. Joseph's Mercy Hospital, Detroit, 1946. 36 Figures. 6 Tables. 260 References. Charles C. Thomas, Publisher, Springfield, Illinois. Price \$4.50.

This book presents the case for early ambulation in a very convincing manner. The history of ambulation is treated in outline form, impressing readers with the number of early writers who recommended it. General

physiologic principles involved are freely discussed. A chapter on postoperative pulmonary complications cites experimental work by Churchill, Hilding, Beecher and others, in support of early postoperative activity. Circulatory, wound, and gastrointestinal complications are treated in short, separate sections, each with an ample bibliography. The chapter on surgical technique contains a number of commendable suggestions, although the author's enthusiasm for catgut is not shared by many surgeons. Stress is laid on muscle splitting and transverse incisions, which are justifiably recommended.

PROBLEMS IN ABNORMAL BEHAVIOUR. By Nathaniel Thornton. The Blakiston Company, Philadelphia, 1946. Price \$2.00.

This book, apparently directed to the layman, covers a most extensive field, from psychoanalysis to endocrinology. In spite of the necessarily superficial approach, it is not without some merit. Quite possibly the physician unfamiliar with present day thought in the field of human behavior might profit from its perusal, on the assumption that he would possess sufficient critical faculties to discern the not infrequent errors, which may best be illustrated by the following example. On page 217, speaking of epilepsy, it is stated, "If there be any evidence of its resting on an organic foundation (for example, brain tumor or general paresis), then we speak of idiopathic epilepsy. Where no organic basis is discoverable, we speak of symptomatic epilepsy." The book is certainly not one to recommend to patients, particularly those suffering from nervous disease. For the public at large, although it might be capable of satisfying a certain morbid curiosity regarding mental disease, it would contribute little to a sympathetic understanding of the subject.

ACIDOSIS. CLINICAL ASPECTS AND TREATMENT WITH ISOTONIC SODIUM BICARBONATE SOLUTION. By Esben Kirk, M.D., Chief Physician, Medical Service, Holstebro District Hospital, Holstebro, Denmark. Copyright by Einar Munksgaard. Translated by Miss Annie I. Fausboll, M.A., and the Author. Einar Munksgaard, Publisher, Copenhagen, 1946. Price: dan. cr. 18.—

"The object of the present book is to spread the knowledge of acidosis and of the treatment of this often dangerous complication with isotonic sodium bicarbonate solution, a therapy which the author had the pleasure of introducing into Denmark in 1934." This statement from the preface fairly sums up the contents of the book, written by a former student of Van Slyke. Clinical forms of acidosis are tabulated and then illustrated by 54 rather generous case reports. A chapter is given to the analytical technique for the determination of the bicarbonate content of the plasma.

The author points out that it was another Dane, S. P. L. Sorensen, at whose suggestion the sign pH was adopted as an expression of the hydrogen ion concentration. The latter is ignored, except for a foot-note, by the definition of "acidosis in a clinical sense . . . as a condition in which the bicarbonate content of the plasma is reduced." Thus the respiratory alkalosis following salicylates arbitrarily becomes a state of acidosis.

There is an interesting account of the earliest use of injections of alkaline solutions, against the cholera in the English epidemic of 1831-32. Otherwise, from an academic viewpoint, there should be little need for such a book in this country.

On the other hand, the author makes a strong case for the intravenous administration of isotonic (1.3 per cent) sodium bicarbonate solution in the therapy of acidosis. Certainly this is more direct and may at times be more beneficial than the current use of sodium lactate for the same purpose. Unfortunately, the former solution is not generally available commercially.

THE PRINCIPLES OF NEUROLOGICAL SURGERY. By Loyal Davis, M.S., M.D., Ph.D., D.Sc. (Hon.). Third Edition, Thoroughly Revised. With 193 Engravings, Containing 348 Illustrations and 5 Plates, 4 in Color. Lea & Febiger, Philadelphia, 1946. Price \$7.50.

A concise and well written reference book of conditions amenable to neurosurgical treatment. The author has been successful in affording a source of practical information for the benefit of those physicians, not specializing in neurology, who are interested in the proper selection of patients for surgical treatment. The rationale and results of operation are emphasized rather than the technical details of the procedure.

The chapter on oraniocerebral injuries should prove a valuable aid in the conservative management of patients with acute head injuries.

Attention is given to the problem of pain. An adequate discussion is included of the accepted surgical procedures employed, and the limitations of each method.

The chapter on the Sympathetic Nervous System is very complete, particularly from the historic aspect. However, the clinical portion of the discussion is not adequate with regard to the surgical treatment of essential hypertension. The newer thoracolumbar type of sympathectomy, which has proven more successful than previous methods, warrants more discussion. Undue emphasis is placed on thiocyanate therapy.

Neurosurgical conditions are encountered with increasing frequency in general practice as well as in many specialties, and this volume should prove invaluable in the diagnosis and proper disposition of patients with such conditions.

